

IN THE AFTERMATH OF EUROPEAN FUNDING. PORTUGAL: PUBLIC SPACE AND PUBLIC ART (I)

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They define their country like "tiny and outlying." A country full with contrasts in the landscape and marked by a strong dual social structure. Portugal is last land in Europe where a Revolution took place.

In the last years Portugal has carried out a big effort to adapt to the new map of the globalization, being fundamental the support of the Europe Funding Scheme.

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There we could point out the beginning for a new concern for the public space specially for the one that, in Portugal, it is denominated green structure (green Spaces) and, like it happens in the rest of the world, the incipient concern for the relationship between the city and her waterfront (river or sea) as so well pointed out J.P Costa in his doctoral thesis¹.

The Lisbon Expo'98 supposed a one more step in this direction. The renovation of an urban big hole involved the decision of designing new communication and transport infrastructures, at the same time that the development model "of the day after" was adopted, a model that it had already demonstrated its effectiveness in the planning of JJ.OO of Barcelona 1992.

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That is clear in the group of urban operations associated to Porto 2001. Materials, designs, acupuncture interventions, and even the development of the flagship projects in charge of Catalan teams.

The logic partly keeps in the program of stadiums and their respective public spaces, associated to the project European Football Championship 2004. However it exists here, like it is demonstrated in the case of Lisbon stadiums, a lost of the control of urban objectives on the part of the City council.



¹ J.P. Costa. La Ribera entre Proyectos. Formación y Transformación del territorio portuario a partir del caso de Lisboa. Barcelona: Departamento de Urbanismo. UPC, 2007

The working and managing style of the Expo extended to the whole country through the Polis program, managed by Parque Expo and about to conclude. This program concentrated on the recovery of the waterfronts of more than a thirty cities of different size and condition. The main objective of the program is the urban regeneration of the area by means of the design of a quality public space.

But the international codes are not the only ones that allow us to explain the huge development of public space projects as well as the massive placement of public art in the squares, streets, parks and rotundas of the Portuguese cities. Because of the XXVth anniversary of the first democratic city councils post Estado Novo in Portugal (year 2001), many municipalities, develop big renovation projects and urban re-qualification. Throughout the territory, urban design teams, execute projects of renovation of the public space, of qualification of the urban centres. But also in the peripheries of the previous "huge development period" and in the residential new areas.

The installation of new infrastructures of transport, freeways, trains, trams... it has generated public new spaces, some of them intermodal. But, like in many areas of Spain, the management of these activities will change substantially when concluding a kind part of the help of the EU.

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In Portugal, Europe has allowed, also, to consolidate the representative democracy, but to coast of forgetting the carnations Revolution. Since 2001, Portugal has sunk in an economic and moral deep crisis. Without the EU support received up to now for the development, will the Portuguese municipalities be capable of continuing committed with the public space as city maker?. An uncommon secret



